



Touch Policy

Why Do We Use Touch?

We may choose to hold children for a variety of reasons, but in general terms we would normally do so for either comfort or reward. We may also need to physically touch, guide or prompt students as an aid to communication or if they require personal care or assistance with other learning activities such as writing, eating or dressing.

Hugging

At Churchill Park School we encourage staff who are using touch for comfort or reward to use a 'Churchill Park School hug' (Please see appendix). This is a sideways on hug, with the adult putting their hands on the child's shoulders. This discourages 'front on' hugging, and the adult's hands on the shoulders limits the ability of the child to turn themselves into you. This can be done either standing or sitting.

Hand-Holding

We recognise that children sometimes enjoy being able to hold hands with adults around them. This is perfectly acceptable when it is age appropriate and the hand holding is compliant. However, if the handholding is being used by an adult as a method of control to move children, this can become a restraint. Therefore, we encourage the use of 'linking up'. This is done by the adult holding their arm out, and the child is encouraged to wrap their hand around the adult's lower arm. The adult's other hand can then be placed over the child's for a little extra security if it is required.

In summary, it is generally deemed appropriate to touch others on the upper arm which would appear to be regarded as a neutral zone in most cultures.

Lap-Sitting

At our Churchill Park School we actively discourage lap-sitting. Children should be taught to seek comfort / attention through other means, for example the Churchill Park School hug. If a child attempts to sit on a staff members lap, we would explain to them that this is not what we do at school, and ask them to sit next to you if it is appropriate.

At times, children may be in such crisis or distress that they hold staff in a way which is not described as above (e.g. 'front on' hug / lap sitting). If this should happen staff members should ensure that they have another member of staff with them if possible and inform a member of the senior leadership team as soon as possible to protect themselves. Staff may be asked to make

a note of this on an incident form which will then be used to monitor the amount of times the student is doing this to staff to see whether this is a 'controlling' behaviour, or whether the child is displaying distressed behaviour regularly.

Please note that although we have a touch policy and believe that contingent touch can be a positive experience for the children that we care for, this does not mean that staff have to touch children, and it should also be realised that some children will not want to be touched. This should always be respected.

If you have any questions or would like a further discussion regarding this policy, please speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team at the earliest available opportunity.

Policy Aims

The purpose of this policy is to outline the ways in which contingent touch are used at Churchill Park School, specifically the ways in which staff are able to physically guide, touch or prompt children in appropriate ways at the appropriate times. It takes into account guidance from Norfolk County Council and Norfolk Steps. It should be read alongside other school policies especially the Respect, Dignity, Behaviour and Positive Handling Policies.

Appendix

- Hip in, Head away
- Sideways on stance
- Closed mittens
- Hand on each shoulder
- Use de-escalation script

Supportive Hug

